

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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P 151805Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9443

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 12396

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: MITTERRAND REQUESTS PARIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY

1. SOCIALIST PARTY FIRST SECRETARY MITTERRAND HAS REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SECRETARY DURING HIS VISIT TO PARIS MAY 27-28. HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS CSCE FOLLOW-ON, MBFR AND PORTUGAL. MITTERRAND FEELS THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL AND TIMELY IN VIEW OF HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW.

2. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE SECRETARY ACCEPT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

-- MITTERRAND IS THE HEAD OF FRANCE'S MOST DYNAMIC POLITICAL PARTY AND HAS BECOME THE DE FACTO SPOKESMAN OF THE FRENCH OPPOSITION.
-- BY AGREEING TO SEE MITTERRAND, THE SECRETARY WOULD BREAK THE ICE WITH RESPECT TO HIGH LEVEL WASHINGTON CONTACTS WITH FRENCH OPPOSITION LEADERS. SUCH CONTACTS ARE NATURAL AND ROUTINE IN U.S. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ALLIED COUNTRIES, BUT HAVE NOT DEVELOPED SIGNIFICANTLY HERE TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR IMAGE WITHIN A MAJOR SEGMENT OF NON-COMMUNIST FRENCH OPINION.
-- IN LINE WITH OUR DESIRE TO PERSUADE LEADING

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EUROPEANS THAT PORTUGAL IS VERY MUCH A

EUROPEAN PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO AN IMPORTANT SOCIALIST WHO HAS GOOD CREDENTIALS AMONG THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFT OUTSIDE OF FRANCE, AND WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE OF MODERATION IN LISBON IF SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATED.

-- IN THE COMPETITION WITHIN THE FRENCH LEFT BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY WOULD HELP MITTERRAND ENHANCE HIS CURRENT POPULAR ADVANTAGE OVER THE COMMUNISTS.

3. IF SECRETARY AGREES, WE WOULD EXPLAIN TO QUAI AND ELYSEE THAT WE REGARD MEETING WITH MITTERRAND AS NORMAL CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. WE BELIEVE WE COULD EXPECT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CRITICISM IN RIGHT OF CENTER PRESS BECAUSE OF MEETING BUT WE DO NOT FEEL THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD AND MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SERIOUSLY PUT OUT BY SUCH A MEETING.

4. AS SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE NOW STANDS, THE MEETING COULD TAKE PLACE OVER COCKTAILS (1830-1930) ON MAY 27TH OR AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN THE EVENING MAY 26.

RUSH

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